



Farm Labor

BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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BAE

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FARM EMPLOYMENT OFF LESS THAN USUAL - HARVEST NEARLY COMPLETED

The number of persons at work on farms declined sharply during November as harvest in most areas neared completion. There were 9,405,000 persons employed at farm work (operators, unpaid family workers and hired workers) on December 1, nearly a million and a half less than a month earlier. However, there were a few more people working on farms than on December 1 last year. With less harvest work and more people employed, both farm operators and hired hands worked fewer hours per day on December 1 than a year ago. This year farm operators averaged 10.5 hours per day and hired workers 9.1 hours.

Harvest of many crops was over by December 1 and others were fast nearing completion with favorable weather the last two weeks in November. Corn harvest was still in progress in most of the country on the first of the month, while cotton picking was also not ended. Grain sorghums in the West Central States were still being harvested. In the Mountain States there were a few sugar beets in the ground where earlier unfavorable weather had delayed completion of harvest. The harvest of citrus fruit and vegetables in the more southern parts of the country was in progress.

For the country as a whole the number of family workers declined considerably during November. The decrease exceeded 10 percent in three southern regions. The number of operators and unpaid family workers was larger on December 1 than a year ago in all regions except for a decrease in the Pacific States, and in the Middle Atlantic and West South Central States where the number was about the same.

The decrease from November 1 to December 1 in the number of hired hands working on farms was large in all but one region of the country. The decrease amounted to about one-third in the West. In the East North Central States there was only a very small decline in the number of hired workers. Decreases in the North Central States were somewhat less than usual due to earlier delays in harvesting corn. There were more hired farm workers employed on December 1 this year than last, except in the South Atlantic and West South Central States. There was no change in the South Atlantic States but a sharp decline in the number of hired hands in the West South Central States.

Hours of work of farm workers on December 1 were nearing their winter level. In the Northeast and North Central regions working days were longer than in the remainder of the country. This was true of both hired workers and farm operators.

More field work and a greater concentration of dairy farms in Northeastern and North Central areas of the country are partly responsible.

In the New England States field work on December 1 was practically at a standstill. Chores and odd jobs were the principal farm operations. The number of persons at work declined about the usual seasonal amount but was somewhat larger than a year earlier. Milder weather on December 1 permitted more outside work than last year. There were about the same number of family workers engaged in farm work on December 1 as a year ago in the Middle Atlantic States but a few more hired workers. Field work was about all finished except for some corn to be husked in Pennsylvania. Unusually warm weather in the week preceding December 1 permitted work at outside odd jobs. The decline in the number of hired workers was less than usual.

The number of hired workers in the East North Central States declined less than usual during November with harvest of the huge corn crop still in progress in much of the area. In southern Illinois a larger than usual percentage of corn was being picked by hand since fields were too wet to use mechanical pickers. A few soybeans were still being combined about December 1 in the southern states of the region. The number of family workers employed decreased seasonally during November but remained larger than a year earlier. There was a considerably larger number of hired hands employed on December 1 than last year.

In the West North Central States the number of hired hands working on farms on December 1 was lower than a month earlier by less than the usual amount and somewhat larger than last year. The number of family workers was down about the usual amount and remained slightly larger than a year ago, as in recent months. Some corn was being harvested in all the region except northern Minnesota and North Dakota. Soybeans were practically all harvested. In Nebraska and Kansas a considerable percentage of the grain sorghum crop was waiting harvest.

In the South Atlantic States the number of hired workers on December 1 was the same as a year ago after a usual decrease from a month earlier. The number of family workers dropped the usual amount to remain slightly larger than last year. With most cotton picked, harvest of other field crops was being completed. A few vegetables were being harvested in coastal areas and citrus harvest in Florida was in full progress.

Some cotton was still being picked in the East South Central States on December 1. Other field work generally consisted of clean-up jobs for various crops. Tobacco stripping was a major job in Kentucky and Tennessee. The number of both family and hired workers decreased as usual from a month ago and remained larger than last year.

The number of hired workers in the West South Central States on December 1 was 14 percent less than last year, the only decrease for any region. Last year the number of hired workers on December 1 was abnormally large due to delays from earlier rainy weather. The number of hired workers was still above the 1935-39 average for December 1. December is the only month in which this occurred in the entire year. The number of family workers was the same as a year ago after a normal seasonal decline. There was still some field work to do in the region. In Texas most harvest work was completed except for cotton picking and sorghum harvest in the High Plains. Citrus, tomatoes and spinach were being harvested in the southern part of the state. Citrus and truck crops were also being harvested in Louisiana. In Oklahoma delayed harvest of cotton and peanuts was being pushed.

Sugar beet harvest was no longer a pressing labor problem in the Mountain States by December 1. Beets had been covered with snow and pulling delayed until the snow was gone. Growers were anxious to complete harvest before beets were frozen in. Favorable weather during late November permitted good progress toward completion of the beet harvest. As a result of the late beet harvest, the number of hired workers in the Mountain States on December 1 was 15 percent larger than last year. The number of family workers was only a little larger than a year ago.

In the Pacific States the number of hired workers was greater on December 1 than a year ago and the number of family workers smaller. Employment shifts during November were not much different than usual. Most harvest work was completed in Washington and Oregon. In California harvest of general crops was about complete but there was still much work on specialty crops. Cotton picking, harvest of navel oranges, dates and olives and pruning of deciduous fruit trees were jobs with high labor requirements. The never ending process of planting, cultivation and harvest of vegetables was also a heavy user of labor.

Farm Labor Situation Improved in 1946

A record volume of agricultural commodities was produced in 1946 with a minimum of labor difficulties. There were still areas and jobs for which a more ample supply of labor could have been used to advantage. For example, experienced dairy hands were still scarce, and more harvest workers could have been used in the Mountain States after rains in October delayed harvest. On the other hand, farmers in parts of the wheat belt canceled requests for aid in locating hands for wheat harvest.

Wage rates paid to hired farm workers reached new highs in 1946. Rates gave some indication of starting to level off in the early part of the year but increased sharply over last year in some areas in October. Wage rates for all geographic regions were higher in 1946 than for the same periods in 1945. The largest increase over last year occurred in the Middle Atlantic States but farm wage rates in this area still are among the lowest in the country.

Weather conditions were a factor in the improved farm labor situation. Interference with field work was much less than in the two previous years. Farmers were able to start field work earlier than usual and this advantage was maintained over most of the season. Some rains in the South immediately after cotton planting time interfered with cultivation and made some replanting necessary. Drought in New Mexico decreased somewhat the amount of farm labor required in that State. Killing frosts generally came later than usual extending the amount of time available for field work in most parts of the country.

The return of war veterans to farm jobs was another significant development in the farm labor situation. About a million veterans were working on farms during peak periods of employment in mid-summer. Part of the veterans increased the farm labor force at work while others replaced less efficient workers who

were employed in previous years only because of war emergency.

For the entire country the number of farm operators and unpaid members of their families working on farms in 1946 was larger than the 1940-44 average during most months of the year. It was, however, somewhat less than in the 1935-39 period. In the South the number of family workers during the year remained considerably under the 1935-39 level and in the Pacific States slightly less but in all other regions family workers exceeded or were about the same in number as in the 1935-39 period.

The number of hired farm workers for the country as a whole during 1946 was considerably smaller than during the 1940-44 and the 1935-39 periods but slightly larger than in 1945 in most months. The decreases below the 1935-39 and 1940-44 average were greatest in the South and in the North Central States. In the Middle Atlantic and the Pacific States the number of hired workers was above the average for 1935-39 during most of the planting and harvest season. Expansion of acreages of crops which require large amounts of labor has led to an upward trend in the number of hired workers in the past 10 years in the Pacific States

Farm Wage Regulations

The President's Executive Order 9801, effective November 9, 1946, terminated all controls relative to wages and salaries of agricultural labor based on the Stabilization Act of 1942. Regulations relative to violations committed prior to the termination date remain in full force and effect.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Bureau of Agricultural Economics

Farm labor: Persons employed, wage rates, indexes and related data,
United States, December 1, 1946, with comparisons

	: Annual : average : 1910-14	: December : average : 1935-39	: December : 1, : 1945	: November : 1, : 1946	: December : 1, : 1946
FARM EMPLOYMENT (thousands of persons)					
Total.....	12,052	9,736	9,245	10,809	9,405
Family labor.....	9,160	7,465	7,217	8,306	7,345
Hired labor.....	2,892	2,271	2,028	2,503	2,060
FARM EMPLOYMENT INDEXES (Adjusted for seasonal variation):					
Total.....	100	90	84	85	85
Family labor.....	100	90	87	88	88
Hired labor.....	100	89	75	74	76
FARM WAGE RATES					
	: Annual : average : 1910-14	: October : average : 1935-39	: October : 1, : 1945	: July : 1, : 1946	: October : 1, : 1946
Per month, with board	\$22.09	\$27.10	\$84.00	\$92.00	\$91.40
Per month, without board.....	29.18	34.90	95.70	106.00	104.00
Per day, with board.....	1.16	1.31	3.98	4.25	4.36
Per day, without board.....	1.42	1.55	4.39	4.84	4.94
Composite rate per month ¹ / _{.....}	24.76	30.20	88.00	96.50	96.40
FARM WAGE RATE INDEXES					
Unadjusted.....	100	122	355	390	389
Adjusted for seasonal variation..	100	118	345	378	378
FARM WAGE RATE INDEXES BY REGION					
New England.....	100	146	353	367	386
Middle Atlantic.....	100	133	336	374	382
East North Central.....	100	122	313	342	351
West North Central.....	100	105	352	346	363
South Atlantic.....	100	113	291	536	343
East South Central.....	100	102	268	292	311
West South Central.....	100	105	328	350	349
Mountain.....	100	111	336	339	351
Pacific.....	100	132	410	426	426
RELATED INDEXES					
Prices received by farmers ² / _{.....}	100	107	198	231	258
Ratio of prices received to farm: wage rates.....	100	88	56	59	66
Average weekly factory earnings ³ / _{.....}	100	206	364	386	---
¹ Weighted average of monthly rates with and without board, and daily rates with and without board converted to a monthly basis.					
² Average of the 15th of the given and the 15th of the previous month.					
³ Factory payroll per employed worker; average of all weeks during the designated month. Revised April 1946.					

Based on reports from 17,390 farmers.

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Farm employment: Persons employed, United States and geographic divisions,
December 1, 1946, with comparisons

TOTAL FARM EMPLOYMENT

Geographic division	December	November 1,	December 1,	November 1,	December 1,
	average 1935-39 1,000's	1945 1,000's	1945 1,000's	1946 1,000's	1946 1,000's
United States	9,736	10,747	9,245	10,809	9,405
New England	232	226	215	236	220
Middle Atlantic	567	661	589	646	600
East North Central	1,422	1,434	1,341	1,456	1,389
West North Central	1,549	1,573	1,486	1,610	1,523
South Atlantic	1,802	2,041	1,586	2,056	1,611
East South Central	1,525	1,748	1,421	1,734	1,490
West South Central	1,764	1,950	1,725	1,953	1,659
Mountain	392	459	376	475	393
Pacific	483	655	506	643	520

FAMILY WORKERS ^{1/}

United States	7,465	8,178	7,217	8,306	7,345
New England	156	156	155	158	157
Middle Atlantic	393	426	405	413	403
East North Central	1,107	1,187	1,121	1,206	1,144
West North Central	1,271	1,324	1,278	1,357	1,304
South Atlantic	1,352	1,581	1,258	1,622	1,283
East South Central	1,278	1,472	1,220	1,488	1,278
West South Central	1,338	1,417	1,215	1,453	1,218
Mountain	277	301	283	309	286
Pacific	293	314	282	300	272

HIRED WORKERS

United States	2,271	2,569	2,028	2,503	2,060
New England	76	70	60	78	63
Middle Atlantic	174	235	184	233	197
East North Central	315	247	220	250	245
West North Central	278	249	208	253	219
South Atlantic	450	460	328	434	328
East South Central	247	276	201	246	212
West South Central	426	533	510	500	441
Mountain	115	158	93	166	107
Pacific	190	341	224	343	248

1/ Including farm operators and members of their families working without wages.

Based on reports from 17,390 farmers who reported for their own farms the number of family and hired workers doing 2 or more days of work during the week of inquiry.

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Farm employment: Total, family and hired workers, United States, 1935-39
average and 1942-46 by months

TOTAL

Month	Average 1935-39	1942	1943	1944	1945	1946
	1,000's	1,000's	1,000's	1,000's	1,000's	1,000's
January 1	8,834	8,287	8,171	8,202	8,005	7,732
February 1	9,019	8,540	8,369	8,383	8,051	7,799
March 1	9,412	8,738	8,730	8,562	8,414	8,263
April 1	10,273	9,483	9,308	9,080	8,982	9,121
May 1	11,465	10,796	10,492	10,068	10,017	10,366
June 1	12,564	11,917	11,659	11,285	10,994	11,422
July 1	12,458	12,009	11,749	11,355	11,100	11,586
August 1	11,515	11,249	11,020	10,608	10,612	11,044
September 1	11,973	11,390	11,502	11,040	10,907	11,111
October 1	12,389	11,921	11,938	11,839	11,052	11,486
November 1	11,399	10,879	10,698	10,690	10,747	10,809
December 1	9,736	9,551	9,519	9,337	9,245	9,405
Annual average 1/	10,920	10,397	10,263	10,037	9,844	10,012

FAMILY WORKERS ^{2/}

January 1	7,159	6,632	6,615	6,622	6,571	6,412
February 1	7,191	6,655	6,638	6,702	6,557	6,375
March 1	7,492	6,940	7,003	6,935	6,894	6,774
April 1	8,031	7,473	7,433	7,401	7,322	7,469
May 1	8,870	8,399	8,248	8,079	8,153	8,391
June 1	9,579	9,037	8,962	8,845	8,637	8,969
July 1	9,320	8,827	8,763	8,623	8,556	8,875
August 1	8,532	8,122	8,058	7,914	7,970	8,258
September 1	8,860	8,191	8,402	8,223	8,094	8,334
October 1	9,190	8,653	8,834	8,928	8,558	8,862
November 1	8,543	8,052	8,064	8,168	8,178	8,306
December 1	7,465	7,272	7,269	7,289	7,217	7,345
Annual average 1/	8,352	7,855	7,857	7,810	7,726	7,864

HIRED WORKERS

January 1	1,675	1,655	1,556	1,580	1,434	1,320
February 1	1,828	1,885	1,731	1,681	1,494	1,424
March 1	1,920	1,798	1,727	1,627	1,520	1,489
April 1	2,242	2,010	1,875	1,679	1,660	1,652
May 1	2,595	2,397	2,244	1,989	1,864	1,975
June 1	2,985	2,880	2,697	2,440	2,357	2,453
July 1	3,138	3,182	2,986	2,732	2,544	2,711
August 1	2,983	3,127	2,962	2,694	2,642	2,786
September 1	3,113	3,199	3,100	2,817	2,813	2,777
October 1	3,199	3,268	3,104	2,911	2,494	2,624
November 1	2,856	2,827	2,634	2,522	2,569	2,503
December 1	2,271	2,279	2,250	2,048	2,028	2,060
Annual average 1/	2,568	2,542	2,406	2,227	2,118	2,148

1/ Annual averages are simple averages of first of month employment estimates.

2/ Includes farm operators and members of their families working without wages.

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Farm employment: Persons employed and index numbers, by type of farming area July 1945 to date ^{1/} -- Continued

Year and month:	Range Area						Northwestern Area									
	2/		:		:		3/		2/		:		:		3/	
	Family	Hired	Total	Family	Hired	Total	Family	Hired	Total	Family	Hired	Total	Family	Hired	Total	
	000	000	000				000	000	000							
1945:	186	90	276	123	89	100	205	98	303	129	126	128				
July:	169	107	276	112	106	109	206	157	363	130	201	153				
Aug.:	204	116	320	135	115	127	214	197	411	135	253	173				
Sept:	203	135	338	134	133	134	231	203	434	145	260	183				
Oct.:	191	100	291	126	99	115	201	126	327	126	162	138				
Nov.:	193	106	299	128	105	118	199	128	327	125	164	138				
Dec.:	182	66	248	120	65	98	192	69	261	121	88	110				
:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	
1946:	187	92	279	124	91	111	206	102	308	129	131	130				
Jan.:	161	55	216	106	54	86	182	41	223	114	53	94				
Feb.:	163	50	213	108	49	84	197	37	234	124	47	99				
Mar.:	165	62	227	109	61	90	199	42	241	125	54	102				
Apr.:	181	76	257	120	75	102	201	45	246	126	58	104				
May :	199	83	282	132	82	112	211	65	276	133	83	116				
June:	202	114	316	134	113	125	222	92	314	140	118	132				
July:	195	111	306	129	110	121	212	154	366	133	197	154				
Aug.:	208	121	329	138	120	130	217	196	413	136	251	174				
Sept:	194	131	325	128	129	129	239	207	446	150	265	188				
Oct.:	198	107	305	131	106	121	197	136	333	124	174	141				
Nov.:	200	116	316	132	115	125	199	130	329	125	167	139				
Dec.:	180	74	254	119	73	101	191	77	268	120	99	113				

^{1/} Corn Area: Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Iowa; Eastern Dairy Area; New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York and Pennsylvania; Western Dairy Area; Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota; Middle Eastern Area; Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, Kentucky and Tennessee Eastern Cotton Area: South Carolina, Georgia and Alabama; Delta Cotton Area; Mississippi, Arkansas, and Louisiana; Western Cotton Area; Oklahoma and Texas; Small Grains Area; North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, and Montana; Range Area; Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah and Nevada; Northwestern Area: Washington, Oregon and Idaho.

^{2/} Includes farm operators and members of their families doing farm work without wages.

^{3/} 1910-14 - 100.

Farm labor program: Foreign workers employed in agriculture,
December 1, 1946 1/

State	Mexicans	Jamaicans	Bahamians	British Hondurans	Barbadians	Newfound-landers	Total
Maine		11				41	52
N. H.	2/ 30	17				32	79
Vt.	2/ 28					78	106
Mass.		31	2		2	28	63
R. I.						5	5
Conn.		970	1			47	1,018
N. Y.	2/ 174	273	8	1	5	103	564
N. J.		272				13	285
Pa.		33				18	51
Ohio		205					205
Ind.		11					11
Ill.	32	81	4				117
Mich.	917	201					1,118
Wis.	80	54		5			139
Minn.	18						18
Iowa	153						153
Mo.		20					20
N. Dak.	37						37
S. Dak.	265						265
Nebr.	1,646						1,646
Kans.	442						442
Del.		55	31		16	4	106
Md.		229	62		2	7	300
Va.							
W. Va.							
N. C.			2				2
S. C.							
Ga.							
Fla.		1,940	4,329		743		7,012
Ky.							
Tenn.							
Ala.							
Miss.							
Ark.							
La.		1,088			30		1,118
Okla.							
Tex.							
Mont.	1,563						1,563
Idaho	1,235						1,235
Wyo.	543						543
Colo.	2,683						2,683
N. Mex.	6						6
Ariz.	1,128						1,128
Utah	430						430
Nev.	137						137
Wash.	13						13
Oreg.	262						262
Calif.	12,366						12,366
U. S.	24,188	5,491	4,439	6	798	376	35,298

1/ Data provided by Requirements and Certifications Section, Program Division, Labor Branch, P.M.A. 2/ Canadians.

Farm labor program: Farm labor placements,
October 1946 1/.

State	October		January 1 to October 31	
	1945	1946	1945	1946
Maine	2,102	673	24,293	35,173
N. H.	1,223	1,002	7,772	20,437
Vt.	191	185	3,497	3,390
Mass.	1,697	175	10,138	3,281
R. I.	370	29	832	205
Conn.	1,662	3,570	24,935	29,429
N. Y.	34,485	19,443	231,520	204,658
N. J.	17,917	8,657	128,821	40,519
Pa.	16,165	7,995	65,042	36,432
Ohio	23,239	1,945	47,443	32,301
Ind.	4,865	1,093	52,094	19,162
Ill.	2,475	2,065	69,794	45,312
Mich.	49,298	25,523	182,470	160,776
Wis.	9,331	1,244	54,121	34,491
Minn.	12,631	5,585	74,806	27,997
Iowa	3,385	328	94,382	34,822
Mo.	1,451	5,132	24,608	14,804
N. Dak.	50,977	9,084	150,175	96,649
S. Dak.	5,880	2,939	58,191	29,206
Nebr.	12,363	5,188	83,072	21,914
Kans.	178	245	16,179	3,944
Del.	3,235	1,551	19,664	12,991
Md.	30,101	5,802	152,708	68,707
Va.	19,003	2,909	100,337	33,910
W. Va.	182	58	2,193	1,109
N. C.	58,584	15,062	218,717	124,607
S. C.	15,640	13,296	91,485	38,670
Ga.	24,178	23,535	146,529	107,478
Fla.	4,287	814	36,412	19,339
Ky.	17,415	399	152,929	14,024
Tenn.	18,660	8,764	155,220	61,438
Ala.	25,591	2,745	145,207	22,412
Miss.	61,287	59,612	184,015	170,863
Ark.	19,565	32,302	288,971	197,390
La.	32,951	10,935	99,831	60,793
Okla.	22,589	5,418	155,536	70,997
Tex.	82,563	50,538	432,529	262,342
Mont.	25,377	6,379	103,883	50,659
Idaho	88,825	33,448	282,086	217,283
Wyo.	20,957	6,457	54,879	22,299
Colo.	47,824	17,615	127,808	115,426
N. Mex.	7,969	5,424	49,876	38,143
Ariz.	7,834	1,109	59,459	28,296
Utah.	27,435	9,663	139,074	69,514
Nev.	483	512	6,146	4,481
Wash.	30,509	25,679	297,950	269,717
Oreg.	21,463	19,350	172,717	180,572
Calif.	106,532	117,743	644,099	599,814
U. S.	1,072,924	579,219	5,724,445	3,752,176

Data from monthly reports of Extension Farm Labor Program, Extension Service, U.S.D.A., Washington, D. C.

Farm labor program: Placements of World War II veterans on farms,
United States, by months, January 1945 - October 1946 1/

Month	As hired hands	As tenants or sharecroppers	All placements
<u>1945</u>			
January	513	80	593
February	730	116	846
March	910	167	1,077
April	1,149	140	1,289
May	1,229	85	1,314
June	1,718	76	1,794
July	3,024	86	3,110
August	3,791	140	3,931
September	3,973	196	4,069
October	5,529	378	5,907
November	4,892	663	5,555
December	4,578	505	4,883
Total	31,756	2,632	34,368

<u>1946</u>			
January	3,186	1,750	4,936
February	3,544	1,814	5,388
March	4,538	1,527	6,065
April	5,707	1,627	7,334
May	8,048	990	9,038
June	12,569	971	13,543
July	16,062	824	16,886
August	21,097	874	21,971
September	12,199	883	13,082
October	12,635	789	13,424

1/ Data from monthly reports of Extension Farm Labor Program, Extension Service, U.S.D.A., Washington, D. C.

Farm labor program: Placements of World War II veterans on farms, by geographic divisions, October, 1946 1/

Area	As hired hands	As tenants or sharecroppers	All placements
New England	101	3	104
Middle Atlantic	543	3	546
East North Central	353	107	460
West North Central	1,431	34	1,465
South Atlantic	159	120	279
East South Central	491	210	701
West South Central	1,394	305	1,699
Mountain	1,693	4	1,697
Pacific	6,470	3	6,473
United States	12,635	789	13,424

1/ Data from monthly reports of Extension Farm Labor Program, Extension Service, U.S.D.A., Washington, D. C.

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